11: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1946
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582 [161] Today, the Dominica Caribs' sexual selection is limited not only by the smallness of their community (about 400 including half-breeds: men, women, and children), but by a growing disapproval of marriage between close cousins, expressed in the usual way, by ridicule. Nevertheless, unions of a more or less permanent nature between first cousins, half and even full siblings, and of mother and daughter with the same man, have occurred and been tolerated within recent times. There appears to subsist the feeling, moreover, that cross-cousins are "less family" than parallel-cousins; and one old woman expounded to me the widespread belief in the genetic inheritance of father's "spirit" and mother's "blood." Sister exchange is not infrequent, while marriage of two brothers to two sisters is extraordinarily common. I know of at least two cases in which a man has children with his wife's unmarried sister; and I should estimate that polygyny (extra-legal, of course) in general is as frequent today as it ever was, being confined, as is natural, to better-than-average bread-winning males.

883 [579] Once school is left behind (12 to 15 years of age), opportunities for anything but furtive meetings between the sexes are rare. The young men spend their days at sea, or working in the high-woods, while the girls, together with their mothers, work around the house, or plant, weed, and reap in provision-gardens scattered far and wide. Neighborly visiting is not common—partly because of petty inter-family feuds, and partly because local standards of hospitality require an exchange of presents between visitor and hostess every time a call is made. The monthly church mass at Salybia, occasional wakes and dances, and the young men's "serenale" on fine moonlit nights are about the only relaxations known. The latter is the name given to promenading bands who make the round of neighboring houses to the accompaniment of Basque tambourines and flutes.

[517] [533]

584 [522] Should a young man call at the home of a prospective sweetheart (or of one whose relationship with him was unknown to her parents), he would not mention her, nor would she appear unless called in from the kitchen or back room by her mother or father. Should his visit coincide with a mealtime (at which even strangers present in the yard are always asked to participate), it would be a sure indication that his suit was acceptable, if the girl herself were sent to serve him food and drink. But in no case would either display any affection before others, although clumsy and to us coarse sexual jokes might not be out of place. No tasks are required of a girl's suitor today, though the old people say that former custom required him to limit his attentions to a bi-monthly visit for some time; and that it was his duty to sweep the yard before his sweetheart's house before leaving after these occasions.

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After the evening meal, the short period before sleep is usually occupied in recounting in great detail the day's experiences. Like archery and pottery, cotton-spinning and hammock-weaving have become things of the past; and as the average Carib home possesses at most one bed, most of the family sleep on the floor or on hard wooden benches.

Death, burial, and mourning customs have been discussed in a previous paper.[8]

There is in the Carib Reserve no ownership of land other than the right to its produce and further exploitation conferred by continuous use. It is otherwise with (planted) fruit-bearing trees, houses, domestic animals, tools and implements, furniture, and the produce of various pursuits whether in cash or kind. Children are given gardens, trees, young pigs or hens for their own. Grown offspring are of course expected to contribute as best they can to the general economy of their (joint) family so long as they remain with it. But when they go to live with a wife, or to make a separate establishment, they take away with them whatever things or rights are theirs. Thus, the house and its contents belong to whichever spouse built, bought, or inherited them, and in the case of separation would be so allotted. In the event of the death of one of the spouses, the surviving spouse inherits the property of the deceased, but is expected to divide movables in excess of personal requirements between grown offspring or deceased's nearest kin. Provision-gardens may, unless apportioned before the late owner's death, be left intact to be worked communally by the surviving spouse and offspring. The fact that all children are allotted gardens, pigs, etc., of their own tends to prevent squabbles over inheritance. A deceased wife's parents are supposed to help their widowed son-in-law unless and until he remarry into another family. When both parents are dead, the house and its contents belong by right to the youngest surviving child, irrespective of sex. Other property may continue to be held communally (when the family remains together), or be divided equally among all the children or according to agreement or to the expressed wish of the deceased. The "old-time" Caribs are said to have been "uncivilized" because they never left anything for their children.

Kinship, reckoned bi-laterally, is recognized to at least the fourth degree (common law), and often far beyond. Nevertheless, it is rare that any obligation is acknowledge outside the joint family. Therefore, because this is largely matrilocal, greater concern is usually shown for mother's than for father's kin. The (Creole) kinship terminology current today naturally reflects French rather than native social structure, but there are several peculiarities in its employment

8 Taylor, *The Caribs of Dominica*, p. 121.